

Portland, Ore. – Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) reacted with anger and frustration today following the broadcast of a 60 Minutes news segment highlighting the lack of basic life-saving equipment for Oregon troops in Iraq,

“I was pleased with the national attention given by 60 Minutes about the shocking lack of equipment for our troops in Iraq,” said Blumenauer. “One point not discussed was the obvious misplaced priorities at the Pentagon. The fact is that year after year, the administration and the leadership in Congress continue to advocate for outrageously expensive military hardware, while leaving our troops needs unmet. The problem is much greater than the so-called “pork” projects highlighted on 60 Minutes. The problem is that this administration doesn’t place a priority on protecting our troops. It would rather spend \$10 billion on unproven, untested missile defense technology and \$72 billion for 227 jet fighters at \$250 million apiece than spend the mere thousands of dollars needed to keep our troops safe. That is the scandal.”

Blumenauer has contacted the Department of Defense on numerous occasions to express concerns about the lack of proper equipment and training for troops in Iraq. Almost one year ago, he and Congresswoman Darlene Hooley (D-Ore.) held a National Guard and Reserve Forum at Camp Withycombe where Blumenauer was first alerted to serious equipment shortages facing Oregon troops in Iraq. Despite numerous conversations and advocacy over the past 11 months with Pentagon and Guard Bureau officials, last night’s 60 Minutes program revealed that the problems continue.

Blumenauer today joined with Hooley and Congressmen Peter DeFazio and David Wu, asking that the administration immediately address the shortages of life-saving equipment for the troops in Iraq. The group also asked for a briefing from the Pentagon.